

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 01499 01 OF 02 131549Z

42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 EUR-25 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

ACDA-19 EB-11 SAB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 CCO-00 SAM-01

OMB-01 /156 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1838

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 1499

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS XF

SUBJ: ISRAELI LEADERSHIP'S PERCEPTION OF ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEL AVIV 0596

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SUMMARY. ON EVE OF FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN'S MEETING WITH SECRETARY, LATEST ISRAELI VIEW ON SEQUENCE OF NEGOTIATIONS, AS STATED BY ALLON MARCH 12, FORESEES (A) SYRIAN-ISRAELI SEPARATION OF FORCES, (B) INTERIM ARRANGEMENT WITH JORDAN AND (C) RENEWAL OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT, SYRIA AND JORDAN. GOI THINKING ON EXTENT OF POSSIBLE WITHDRAWALS IN CONTEXT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 01499 01 OF 02 131549Z

NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS HAS NOT STRUCK OUT IN ANY NEW DIRECTIONS

IN RECENT MONTHS. IN ANYTHING, GOI POSITION ON REMAINING ON GOLAN HEIGHTS HAS HARDENED. ISRAELIS REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE US PRESSURES FOR WITHDRAWALS BEYOND WHAT THEY THEMSELVES REGARD AS BORDERS ESSENTIAL FOR THEIR SECURITY. IN RECENT WEEKS, ISRAELIS ALSO HAVE BECOME CONCERNED ABOUT NEGATIVE SOVIET ROLE IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS, HARDENING SYRIAN STAND AND TENSION ON NORTHERN BORDER, AND SPECULATIONS OVER HUSSEIN'S INTENTIONS REGARDING WEST BANK. ONLY BRIGHT SIGN, FROM ISRAELI VIEWPOINT, IS GROWING EVIDENCE OF EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS TO REACH SOME TYPE OF MODUS VIVENDI WITH ISRAEL AS EVIDENCED BY GOE PLANS FOR OPENING SUEZ CANAL AND REHABILITATING CANAL CITIES. HAVING JUST COMPLETED EXHAUSTING PROCESS OF FORMING NEW GOVERNMENT, ISRAELI LEADERSHIP HAS NOT YET HAD EITHER TIME OR ENERGY FOR ANY MAJOR REASSESSMENT OF ITS STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES. FROM ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE, FUTURE IS UNCERTAIN AND FULL OF DIFFICULTIES. END SUMMARY.

1. SCENARIO FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. MOST AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DATE BY GOI PERSONALITY ON HOW ISRAEL SEES NEGOTIATIONS UNFOLDING IN THE FUTURE WAS STATED BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ALLON IN SPEECH IN JERUSALEM MARCH 12 (SEPTTEL). ALLON SAID TIMETABLE SHOULD BE (A) SEPARATION OF FORCES AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA; (B) AN INTERIM AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN IF AT ALL POSSIBLE AND (C) RENEWAL OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, PRESUMABLY AT GENEVA, WITH EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA. DUE TO HIS POSITION, WE ASSUME THAT THIS SEQUENCE MUST BE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THINKING OF TOP LEVEL ISRAELI DECISION MAKERS INTERIM AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN WOULD NO DOUBT FORCE NEW ELECTIONS SINCE THIS WAS UNDERTAKING WHICH NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY DEMANDED AND RECEIVED FROM LABOR ALIGNMENT BEFORE AGREEING TO JOIN NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT.

2. TERRITORIAL ISSUE. THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT ISRAELI THINKING ON EXTENT OF POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES HAS DEMONSTRATIVELY CHANGED FROM WHAT IT WAS BEFORE OCTOBER WAR. IF ANYTHING, IT HAS HARDENED, ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO GOLAN HEIGHTS. PRIOR TO OCTOBER, ISRAELI LEADERS, EVEN MRS. MEIR, SAID THAT THEY COULD FORESEE POSSIBILITY OF SOME LIMITED WITHDRAWAL FROM GOLAN HEIGHTS. SINCE WAR, HOWEVER, STATEMENT BY PUBLIC LEADERS HAVE BECOME VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TEL AV 01499 01 OF 02 131549Z

HARDLINE ON THIS SUBJECT WITHMOST ISRAELIS CALLING FOR NO WITHDRAWAL BEYOND JUNE 1967 CEASEFIRE LINES. ANY WITHDRAWAL FROM WEST BANK REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE, BUT MOST ISRAELIS PROBABLY WOULD STILLBE WILLING TO IMPLEMENT GENERAL LINES OF ALLON PLAN. AS FAR AS SINAI GOES, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR MOST ISRAELIS TO CONCEIVE OF WITHDRAWAL BEYOND LINE FROM EL ARISH TO SHARM EL-SHEIKH. ANY GOI PLAN FOR WITHDRAWAL BEYOND THAT LINE WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC CONDITIONING, WITH RECOGNITION THAT LIKUD AND OTHERS WOULD

BITTERLY RESIST.

3. ISRAEL'S SIX YEAR POLICY OF ESTABLISHING SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES HAS OF COURSE COMPLICATED SITUATION SINCE ABANDONMENT OF ALMOST ANY OF THESE SETTLEMENTS WOULD BRING STRONG FORCES TO BEAR AGAINST GOI. ISRAELIS ARE AWARE THAT THEY MAY COME UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE TO WITHDRAW BEYOND WHAT IS OUTLINED ABOVE AND ALWAYS IN BACK OF THEIR MINDS IS FEAR THAT USG WILL TRY TO FORCE THEM INTO ALMOST TOTAL WITHDRAWAL. IN SPEECH REFERRED TO ABOVE, ALLON EVIDENTLY ALLUDED TO USG PRESSURE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WHEN HE SAID THAT IT "BEHOOVES THE FRIENDS OF THE ARABS--PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY ARE THE FRIENDS OF BOTH PARTIES--TO EXERT THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE ARAB CAPITALS AND GET THEM TO ADOPT MORE SOBER, REALISTIC AND LONG RANGE POLICIES. EXTREME DEMANDS MADE OF ISRAEL WILL ONLY SERVE TO DRIVE US INTO A STUBBORN CORNER, WHICH WILL NOT LEAD TO ANY ARRANGEMENT OR SOLUTION."

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 01499 02 OF 02 131538Z

42

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 1499

4. GROWING ISRAELI CONCERNS. IN RECENT WEEKS, THERE HAS BEEN AN APPRECIABLE UPSWING IN CONCERN, AS EVIDENCED BY OUR CONTACTS WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE ISRAELIS AND BY PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF ISRAELI LEADERS OVER THREE SUBJECTS--SYRIAN INTENTIONS ON WAR AND PEACE, SOVIET AIMS IN MIDDLE EAST, AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUSSEIN AND THE PLO. WITH RESPECT TO FIRST CONCERN, TENSE SITUATION ON NORTHERN FRONT AS WELL AS RECENT STATEMENTS BY SYRIAN LEADERS HAVE LED MANY ISRAELIS TO QUESTION WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO EVEN ARRIVE AT SEPARATION OF FORCES AGREEMENT ON TERMS WHICH ISRAEL CAN ACCEPT, MUCH LESS TO ARRIVE AT A FINAL PEACE AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA. MRS. MEIR AND MARCH 12 THAT, IF EFFORTS TO ATTAIN ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT COLLAPSE, IT WILL BE FAULT OF SYRIANS FOR HAVING PUT FORTH IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS. REGARDING SOVIET INTENTIONS, GROMYKO'S RECENT SWING THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 01499 02 OF 02 131538Z

MIDDLE EAST HAS HEIGHTENED ISRAELI CONCERNS THAT SOVIETS MIGHT UPSET PEACE SETTLEMENT EFFORTS IN ANY NUMBER OF WAYS:
(A) BY HARDENING SYRIAN POSITION ON DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES OR EVEN PUSHING SYRIANS INTO A RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES,
(B) BY PUSHING PALESTINIAN ISSUE TO FOREFRONT AND THEREBY SCUTTling GENEVA CONFERENCE, OR (C) BY UPSETTING EGYPTIAN TREND TOWARDS MODERATION AND IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST AND PARTICULARLY WITH USG.

7. FINAL ISRAELI CONCERN RELATES TO HUSSEIN'S INTENTIONS REGARDING WEST BANK. PRESS HAS BEEN FILLED WITH SPECULATION OVER PAST WEEK THAT HUSSEIN WILL RENOUNCE HIS CLAIM OVER WEST BANK AND RECOGNIZE PLO AS "LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." SOME POLITICAL ANALYSTS AND COMMENTATORS HAVE RECENTLY STATED WITH APPREHENSION THAT CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN STATE COMPRISED OF GAZA AND WEST BANK IS LIKELY TO BE SUPPORTED BY USG IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH ARAB WORLD. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN ADAMANT GOI OPPOSITION TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT.

8. EGYPT. IN SPITE OF GROWING CONCERNS NOTED ABOVE, ONE HOPEFUL SIGN IN MIDDLE EAST EQUATION WHICH ISRAELI POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE DRAWN ATTENTION TO IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS HAS BEEN POSSIBILITY THAT EGYPT HAS SET ITS SIGHT ON PEACE--NOT PEACE AGREEMENT AS EBAN OUTLINED IN HIS SPEECH AT OPENING SESSION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE LAST DECEMBER, BUT AT LEAST A WILLINGNESS ON PART

OF EGYPT TO PUT ASIDE WAR AND DEVOTE ITSELF TO ITS VERY CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. SMOOTH AND TROUBLE-FREE MANNER IN WHICH DISENGAGEMENT WAS CARRIED OUT AND NUMEROUS STATEMENTS OUT OF CAIRO ON EGYPTIAN PLANS FOR REBUILDING AND DEVELOPING SUEZ CANAL

AREA HAVE IMPRESSED ISRAELIS. DEFMIN DAYAN IN RECENT KNESSET
STATEMENT NOTED THESE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS AS HAVE PRIMIN MEIR
AND DEPPRIMIN ALLON (TEL AVIV 1430 AND TEL AVIV 1431.

9. IN CONCLUSION, ISRAELIS REMAIN UNSURE OF FUTURE, FORESEEING
MANY POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS AHEAD. GOI
REMAINS FULLY COMMITTED TO ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS
BUT IS APPROACHING UPCOMING PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONSIDERABLE
CAUTION AND DEEP INGRAINED SUSPICION OF ARAB-SOVIET INTENTIONS.
HAVING JUST COMPLETED WEARYING PROCESS OF FORMING NEW COALITION
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 01499 02 OF 02 131538Z

GOVERNMENT, ISRAELI LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY HAS HAD NEITHER
TIME NOR ENERGY TO REASSESS ITS STRATEGY OR GOALS.
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